



MAR.  
10c

THE HAND OF

# FATE

HE'S JUST TRYING TO SCARE US, DON'T IMAGINE -- EACH DOOR IS A YEAR AND IF WE PASS THRU TO PEEK, WE CAN'T EVER COME BACK! WHAT A LAUGH!







WEB COMIC  
UNIVERSE.COM



# HERE'S THE BIGGEST **2 for 1** BARGAIN IN POCKET-SIZED BOOKS!

2 Complete, Unabridged Novels—  
In 1 Pocket-Sized Book . . .

for Only  
**35c**

NOW—thrill to adventure, mystery and romance in every page of ACE DOUBLE NOVEL BOOKS . . . a brand new series of action-packed double novels, that give you the most exciting reading for your money.

Each book is crammed with the kind of nerve tingling reading you want . . . thrill-starved, money-hungry men and women . . . smashing climaxes . . . suspenseful endings . . . untamed love! BUT DON'T DELAY . . . these sensational ACE DOUBLE NOVEL BOOKS are at your newsdealer's. Ask him for them by name today . . . OR MAIL THE COUPON . . . NOW!

← ENJOY ONE NOVEL flip the book over AND READ THE SECOND!

ACE BOOKS, Inc. Dept. AC 4

23 West 47th Street, New York 36, N. Y.

Rush my copies of the new 2-in-1 sensation . . . ACE DOUBLE NOVEL BOOKS

I have enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_ to cover the cost of the selections checked below, at 35c each (3 for \$1)

## MYSTERY-ADVENTURE

- ☐ The Grinning Gismo plus  
Too Not for Hell
- ☐ Twist The Knife Slowly plus  
The Big Fix
- ☐ The Scarlet Spade plus  
Drown To Evil
- ☐ The Executioner plus  
So Dead My Love
- ☐ If I Die Before I Wake plus  
Decay
- ☐ Dead Ahead plus  
Mrs. Homicide

## WESTERNS

- ☐ Bad Man's Return plus  
Bloody Hoofs
- ☐ Rimrock Rider plus  
Mossacre At White River
- ☐ Plunder Valley plus  
The Branded Lawman
- ☐ Gunsmoke Gold plus  
Terror Rides The Range
- ☐ Hell On Hoofs plus  
The Brozos Firebrand
- ☐ Wild Horse Range plus  
The Man From Boot Hill

Ace Books pays all postage. No C.O.D.'s.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZONE \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

**DON'T DELAY—MAIL  
THE COUPON NOW!**



# TO BEHOLD HIS DOOM



*Lou Cameron*

IT WAS AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION IN THE NEAR EAST THAT FIRST UNEARTHED THE MIRROR FROM A FORBIDDEN TOMB. OF COURSE THE ARCHAEOLOGISTS HAD SCOFFED AT THE CURSE SUPPOSED TO BEFALL THOSE WHO TOUCHED IT. BUT THEY HAD NO SOONER CRATED THE MIRROR TO THE MUSEUM WHEN ALL WERE MYSTERIOUSLY SLAIN... FOR YEARS THE UNHOLY MIRROR GATHERED DUST IN THE MUSEUM—UNTIL ONE DAY A PORTER DISCARDED IT ALONG WITH SOME JUNK. AND THE DAY STANLEY TIMOR STUMBLED ON IT, HE HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING THE STRANGE PACT BETWEEN THE MIRROR AND THE FULL MOON!

BAH! NOTHING HERE IN THIS PILE OF JUNK BUT THIS OLD MIRROR. STILL, MAYBE I CAN SELL THE FRAME FOR A FEW BUCKS. HUH, DID I HEAR SOMETHING?

HE WHO HOLDS THE DEVIL'S MIRROR MUST USE IT WISELY... OR DIE!



IT HAD BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE STANLEY'S POCKETS HAD HELD ANY MONEY, AND IT WAS DESPERATION THAT MADE HIM FORAGE AMONG THE JUNK IN BACK OF THE MUSEUM. BUT EVEN AS HE HELD THE HARMLESS-LOOKING MIRROR ALOFT...

IT'S REFLECTING THE FULL MOON! BUT THAT MOVING HAZE...

THE HAZE GRADUALLY DISSIPATED AND STANLEY FOUND HIMSELF GAPING AT A GRISLY REALISTIC SCENE...

THE HOUSE OF HORRORS BLOWING UP... THOSE PEOPLE KILLED! AND THE DATE! IT--IT'S TOMORROW!





**BAFFLED AND SHAKEN, STANLEY STUFFED THE MIRROR UNDER HIS COAT AND SLUNK AWAY IN THE NIGHT...**

IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE FOR THIS THING TO FORETELL THE FUTURE OR WAS I SEEING THINGS?



FOOLISH MORTAL...! HOW ARE YOU TO KNOW THE FULL MOON TEARS AWAY THE VEIL TO THE FUTURE!

**BUT THE SEED OF GREED HAD BEEN PLANTED IN STANLEY'S BRAIN, AND AS AN IDEA DAWNED ON HIM, HE SLOWLY DREW BACK WITH A SATISFIED SMIRK.**

AHMM! IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS! WHY SHOULD I RISK MY LIFE FOR THEM? LET IT BLOW UP! AND IF IT DOES...!



**THE FOLLOWING DAY, STANLEY FOUND HIMSELF IRRESISTIBLY DRAWN TO THE SCENE DEPICTED IN THE MIRROR.**

IT'S STILL INTACT! THOSE FOOLS SHOULDN'T BE GOING IN THERE! SUPPOSE IT DOES BLOW UP!



**HE RESUMED HIS STANCE OF WATCHFUL WAITING... SOMEHOW SURE THAT THE MIRROR HAD CORRECTLY PREDICTED THE HORROR ABOUT TO UNFOLD, AND SUDDENLY THEIR WAS A SHATTERING EXPLOSION.**



**MAYBE I OUGHT TO WARN THEM. MAYBE I OUGHT TO TELL THE POLICE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE...!**



HURRY, STANLEY TIMOR! THEIR LIVES ARE IN YOUR HANDS NOW!

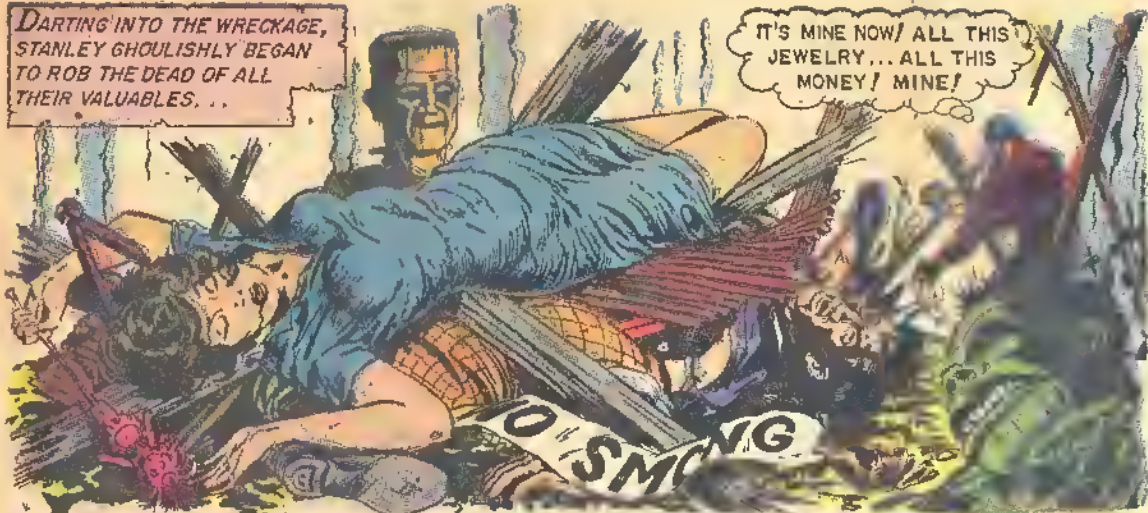
**SCREAMS AND MOANS FOLLOWS IN THE WAKE OF THE EXPLOSION, AND THEN SILENCE, DEATHLY SILENCE.**





DARTING INTO THE WRECKAGE, STANLEY GHOULISHLY BEGAN TO ROB THE DEAD OF ALL THEIR VALUABLES...

IT'S MINE NOW! ALL THIS JEWELRY... ALL THIS MONEY! MINE!



HE HAD WORKED FAST AND NOW AS HE RAN WITH HIS LOOT, NO SURVIVOR HAD SEEN HIM... EXCEPT ONE WHO SEES ALL...

THAT VOICE...! WHO--WHO SAID THAT? W--WHAT'S THAT? I'M SEEING THINGS! I BETTER GET OUT OF HERE!

HIS HAUL ADDED UP TO A SIZABLE AMOUNT AND STANLEY GLOATED...

ALL THIS MEANS A NEW START FOR ME! NEW CLOTHES! MONEY IN MY POCKETS! I'M GOING TO LIVE NOW! I'LL MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME!

RUN, STANLEY TIMOR! RUN! BUT YOU'LL PAY FOR YOUR ILL-GOTTEN GAINS. YOUR FATE HAS ALREADY BEEN WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF ETERNITY!



HE MOVED TO A FANCY HOTEL AND BOUGHT A NEW WARDROBE. YES, STANLEY DENIED HIMSELF NOTHING EVEN AS HE DAILY WATCHED THE MIRROR FOR FURTHER PREDICTIONS. BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL A MONTH LATER...

ONCE MORE THAT HAZE OBSCURED THE MIRROR AND THEN GRADUALLY LIFTED TO REVEAL...

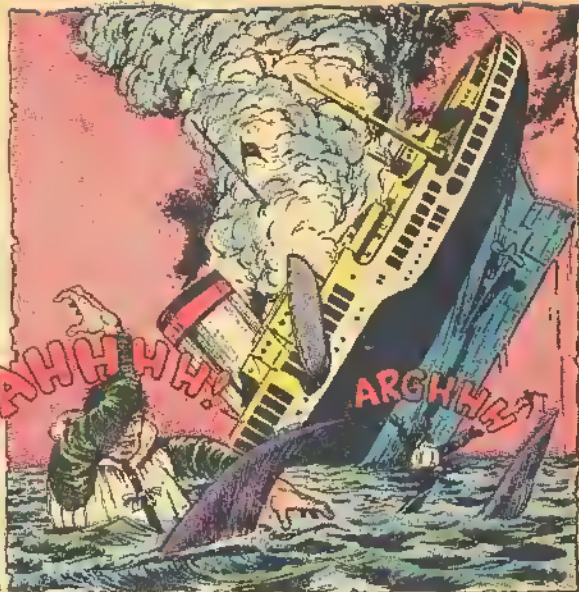
THE S.S. LIBERTY...! AND THE DATE... MAY 12! THAT--THAT'S NEXT WEEK!

THE FULL MOON...! IT'S SHINING IN THERE AGAIN! I REMEMBER... THAT'S HOW IT HAPPENED LAST TIME!





THE SHIP'S NAME STRUCK A RESPONSIVE CHORD. STANLEY HAD READ OF THE IMMINENT LAUNCHING OF THE NEW OCEAN LINER. AND EVEN AS HE STARED, HE BEHELD AN AWESOME SIGHT... THE SHIP EXPLODED!



GREAT SCOTT! THAT SHIP IS GOING TO GO DOWN WITH ALL HANDS ON THE TWELFTH! THAT'S ONLY FOUR DAYS AWAY. BUT WHAT GOOD WILL THAT DO ME? I CAN'T SAIL ON THE CURSED SHIP TO REAP A HARVEST! I'D GO DOWN WITH IT!



IT WASN'T LIVES THAT CONCERNED STANLEY ANYMORE! ALL HE WAS CONCERNED WITH NOW WAS HOW TO CAPITALIZE ON THE TRAGEDY THAT THE STRANGE MIRROR FORETOLD...

I GOT IT! AND IT'S FOOLPROOF! IT'LL MAKE ME A FORTUNE! HA HA!



IT WAS EASY TO STUFF A FEW CASES WITH ROCKS AND JUNK AND THEN HAVE THEM SEALED AND CONSIGNED TO THE ILL-FATED SHIP FOR SHIPMENT. AND THEN...

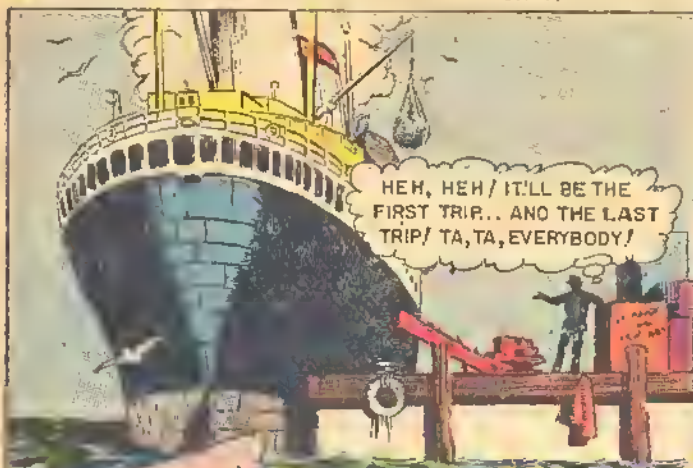
I'M SHIPPING SOME CASES OF VERY VALUABLE CARGO ON THE NEW S.S. LIBERTY WHICH SAILS TOMORROW! I'D LIKE TO INSURE THE SHIPMENT FOR ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS.

GLAD TO OBLIGE, SIR. THAT NEW SHIP IS A REAL BEAUTY!





IT WAS DONE! THERE WAS NO THOUGHT NOW ABOUT WARNING THE INNOCENT OF THE DOOM THAT THREATENED THEM. NO... STANLEY EVEN TOOK TO WATCHING THE FINAL PREPARATIONS OF THE SHIP'S MAIDEN VOYAGE-- CALLOUS TO ALL THAT WENT ON...



NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS WAIT FOR THE INSURANCE CHECK. THAT'S THE EASIEST HUNDRED GRAND ANYBODY EVER MADE!

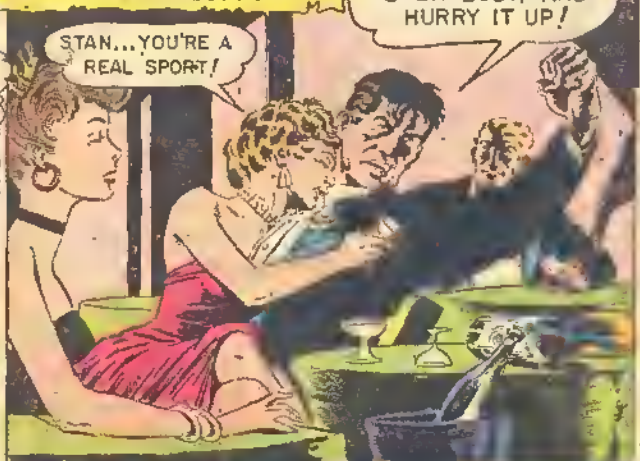
PERHAPS,  
BUT THOSE LIVES WILL  
BE CREDITED TO YOUR  
ACCOUNT...AND THERE  
WILL BE AN AC-  
COUNTING. HAVE NO  
FEAR OF THAT!



THE MIRROR HAD MADE A FORTUNE FOR HIM AGAIN AND STANLEY BEGAN TO LIVE RIOTOUSLY. . . TOSSING HIS ILL-GOTTEN GAINS TO THE FOUR WINDS. . .

WAITER! MORE  
CHAMPAGNE! MORE  
CHAMPAGNE FOR  
EVERYBODY! AND  
HURRY IT UP!

STAN...YOU'RE A  
REAL SPORT!



TSK! TSK! NOW  
AIN'T THAT  
TOO BAD!

Shark  
No Ho

Government and  
the giant in-  
dustry  
today a contract  
to result in a  
power for the pub-  
lic next few years."

CAN YOU SPARE A DIME,  
MISTER! MUMPH!

OUT OF MY WAY, YOU FILTHY  
BEGGAR/ GO FIND YOURSELF A  
MIRROR/ HA/ HA/

HE HAD FATHOMED THE SECRET OF THE MIRROR NOW AND ANOTHER MONTH . . . FOUND HIM WAITING ANXIOUSLY FOR THE NEXT PORTENT OF TRAGEDY ON WHICH HE COULD CAPITALIZE . . .

COME ON, MIRROR... I'M WAITING!  
THE MOON IS FULL TONIGHT!





ONCE MORE THE VAPOROUS CLOUDS IN THE MIRROR GAVE WAY TO A FORBIDDING PICTURE OF THE FUTURE...

THOSE MEN...THEY'RE DYING OF SOME DREADFUL DISEASE. HOW HORRIBLE! THEY'RE WASTING AWAY! GOOD HEAVENS! COULD THAT BE AN OMEN OF SOME PLAGUE THAT WILL STRIKE THE CITY A WEEK FROM TODAY!?



AND THEN HE CAUGHT SIGHT OF ONE OF THE VICTIMS... A SIGHT THAT CONGEALED HIS BLOOD IN HORROR...

IT'S ME! I'M ONE OF THE VICTIMS!!



NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE! I HAVE TOO MUCH TO LIVE FOR! I WON'T DIE! NOT NOW!



FRANTIC WITH FRIGHT, HE WAS SUDDENLY GALVANIZED INTO ACTION...

I'LL LEAVE THE CITY!  
I'LL LEAVE THE COUNTRY!  
IT WON'T GET ME! IT WON'T!



CURSE YOU...I'LL BEAT YOU YET! THANKS FOR THE WARNING...BUT I WON'T BE AROUND WHEN THAT DISEASE STRIKES! I HAVE MONEY NOW! I CAN BUY MY WAY OUT!



YOU CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM YOUR FATE, STANLEY! YOU MUST LEARN THAT!

WHICH IS THE FIRST SHIP THAT'S GOING TO SAIL OUT OF HERE?



THE MUDHAWK/ SAILS TONIGHT. BUT SHE'S A DIRTY OLD TRAMP. NOT MUCH FOR PASSENGERS!



WHAT DID IT MATTER THAT IT WAS A DIRTY OLD BOAT? IT REPRESENTED STANLEY'S CHANCE TO ESCAPE THE HORRIBLE FATE AUGURED BY THE MIRROR. WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD HE RAN TOWARD THE SHIP.

HERE! THERE'S MORE THAN ENOUGH MONEY FOR PASSAGE. I MUST SAIL WITH YOU TONIGHT!

GOT A PASSPORT? NOBODY SAILS WITHOUT A PASSPORT!

CURSE THE PASSPORT! I HAVEN'T TIME TO GET ONE! I MUST SAIL TONIGHT!

WE'RE NOT TAKING CHANCES WITH THE LAW! NOBODY GETS ON THIS SHIP WITHOUT A PASSPORT!

STANLEY WAS TOO FRANTIC TO BE DENIED...

YOU FOOL! OUT OF MY WAY! NOTHING IS GOING TO STOP ME! NOTHING!

THE BLOW DROPPED THE MATE TO THE DECK AND STANLEY DARTED INTO THE HOLD LIKE A FRIGHTENED RAT. FOR TWO DAYS HE COWERED THERE... NOT DARING TO MOVE UNTIL THE SHIP WAS WELL OUT TO SEA...

THEY'VE STOPPED! WE MUST HAVE MADE SOME PORT! I'VE OUTWITTED THE MIRROR! AT LAST I'M SAFE!

CAUTIOUSLY, HE MADE HIS WAY ON DECK ONLY TO OBSERVE THAT THE SHIP WAS MOTIONLESS IN MID-OCEAN AND A DEADLY STILLNESS PERVADED EVERYTHING...

YOU THERE! WHY DID WE STOP HERE? I NEVER HEARD OF ANYTHING LIKE THIS! I WANT TO SEE THE CAPTAIN...

NOBODY CAN SEE THE CAPTAIN/HE DIED LAST NIGHT / EVERYBODY... IS... DYING!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, YOU FOOL! I MUST GET TO SHORE! I— / AGHHH / YOUR FACE...!

TAKE A GOOD LOOK / NONE OF US WILL EVER SEE LAND AGAIN / THE TUB IS CRAWLING WITH... SMALLPOX!

AND THUS IT SHALL ALWAYS BE. ONCE YOUR DESTINY IS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF FATE... THERE IS NO ESCAPING IT! STANLEY FOUND THAT OUT!

THE END



# A Hand of FATE Mystery

#29

THE POWERS OF THE UNKNOWN HAVE OFTEN PLAYED WEIRD TRICKS WITH MORTAL MAN AND THE STRANGEST ONE TOOK PLACE IN NEW ORLEANS MANY YEARS AGO WHEN THE CITY WAS STILL A PLACE OF MYSTERY AND ENCHANTMENT. AN AGED MEDIUM GATHERED HER SMALL BAND OF BELIEVERS FOR HER LAST SEANCE

I SHALL DIE THIS NIGHT, MY FRIENDS, AND MY FINAL WISH IS THAT MY BODY BE SENT BACK TO MY NATIVE FRANCE TO BE BURIED. IF NOT, I CAN NEVER REST IN PEACE!

WE ARE PENNILESS, MADAM! HOW CAN WE AFFORD TO SEND YOUR REMAINS BACK TO FRANCE?

YOU MUST FIND A WAY! THAT IS MY FINAL REQUEST!

THE OLD WOMAN DIED THAT SAME NIGHT. HER DESTITUTE FLOCK PUT HER IN A COFFIN AND SEALED IT IN A CRYPT OVERLOOKING THE SEA. MONTHS PASSED AND THE MEDIUM'S WISHES STILL HAD NOT BEEN CARRIED OUT

THE CRYPT BECAME HAUNTED WITH UNEARTHLY SOUNDS AND VISIONS. SOON A GREAT FLOOD CAME AND INUNDATED THE CITY. THE CRYPT, THOUGH FLOODED, WAS LEFT INTACT, BUT THE COFFIN WITH THE MEDIUM'S BODY HAD MYSTERIOUSLY VANISHED!

HER SPIRIT DOES NOT REST! SEE HOW IT HOVERS OVER THE GRAVE!

THAT WAILING--- WILL IT NEVER CEASE...?

WEEKS LATER, ON THE COAST OF FRANCE TWO MEN MADE A STARTLING DISCOVERY

PIERRE, LOOK! A COFFIN! IT MUST HAVE BEEN SWEEPED UP WITH THE TIDE!

FROM THE LOOKS OF IT, IT HAS BEEN IN THE WATER A LONG TIME!

UPON INVESTIGATION IT WAS FOUND THAT THE COFFIN AND THE BODY IN IT WAS FROM THE CRYPT LOCATED IN A LAND MANY MILES ACROSS THE SEAS. THE MEDIUM'S LAST WISH WAS FULFILLED. SHE WAS LAID TO REST IN THE SOIL OF HER BELOVED COUNTRY. HOW THIS AMAZING FEAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED REMAINS A BAFFLING MYSTERY IN THE ANNALS OF THE SUPERNATURAL!

THE END



# Whom the IMAGE STRIKES

WHEN BART WESTCOTT, A STRUGGLING YOUNG LAWYER, WENT TO ENGLAND ON BUSINESS FOR HIS FIRM, HE CONSIDERED HIMSELF VERY LUCKY TO HAVE AN INTRODUCTION TO SIR WEIR HARTMAN, ONE OF THE GREATEST CRIMINAL LAWYERS IN BRITAIN, WHO HAD THE REPUTATION OF NEVER LOSING A CASE. BEFORE BART RETURNED TO HIS OWN COUNTRY HE WAS INVITED TO SPEND A WEEKEND WITH SIR WEIR AT HIS HOME OUTSIDE OF LONDON. HE FOUND HIS FAMOUS HOST HAD A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WIFE, AND A STRANGE HOBBY.

LONG AGO I BECAME INTERESTED IN OLD SUPERSTITIONS AND DEMONOLOGY... WHICH LED ME TO COLLECTING IMAGES OF DEMONS WHO WERE SUPPOSED TO HAVE VARIOUS POWERS OVER MANKIND.

THEY'RE SO HORRIBLE  
THEY'RE FASCINATING,  
SIR WEIR. THIS ONE  
ESPECIALLY.



THIS IS BAE...ONE OF THE OLDEST AND MOST VALUABLE THAT I POSSESS, AND MY FAVORITE.

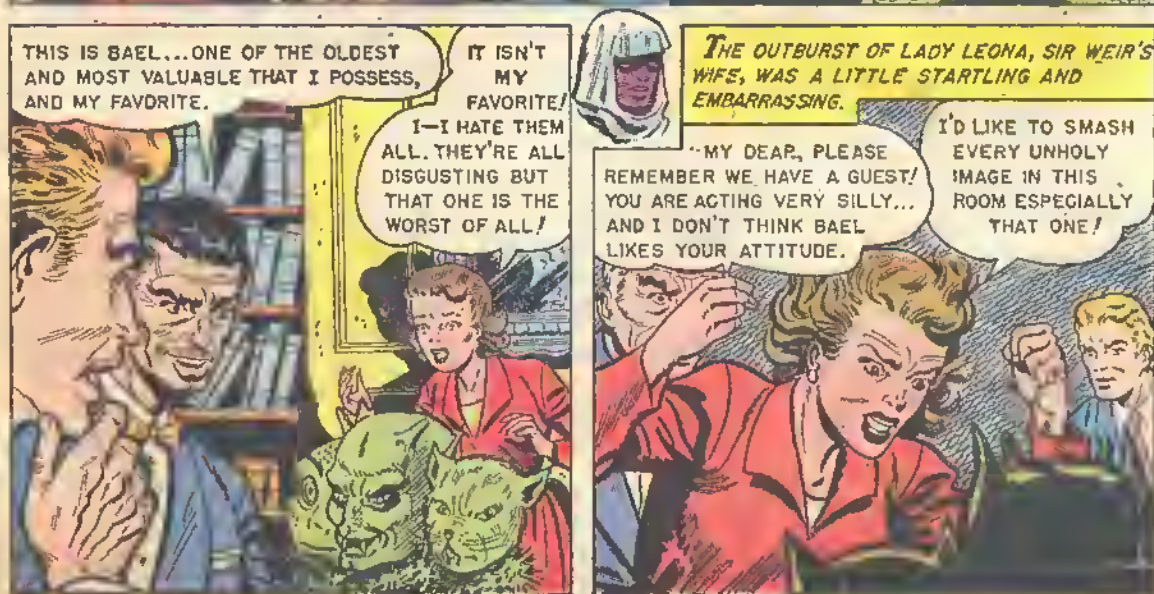
IT ISN'T MY FAVORITE!

I—I HATE THEM ALL. THEY'RE ALL DISGUSTING BUT THAT ONE IS THE WORST OF ALL!

THE OUTBURST OF LADY LEONA, SIR WEIR'S WIFE, WAS A LITTLE STARTLING AND EMBARRASSING.

—MY DEAR, PLEASE REMEMBER WE HAVE A GUEST! YOU ARE ACTING VERY SILLY... AND I DON'T THINK BAE... LIKES YOUR ATTITUDE.

I'D LIKE TO SMASH EVERY UNHOLY IMAGE IN THIS ROOM ESPECIALLY THAT ONE!





DESPITE HIS WIFE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS COLLECTION, SIR WEIR CONTINUED TO TALK ABOUT THEM ALL DURING DINNER.



DO YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT BAEI, MR. WESTCOTT?

VERY LITTLE, SIR, EXCEPT THAT HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ONE OF THE FORMS OF THE DEVIL I BELIEVE.



IN THE STUDY OF DEMONOLGY, MY YOUNG FRIEND, YOU LEARN THAT THERE ARE MANY DEVILS, EACH ONE WITH HIS OWN CHARACTERISTICS AND REALM. PERHAPS YOU TOO WERE DRAWN TO BAEI BECAUSE HE IS A LAW EXPERT.



AH, YES, MR. WESTCOTT... FOR A YOUNG LAWYER, ESPECIALLY ONE HANDLING CRIMINAL CASES, BAEI COULD BE QUITE A HELP. HE KNOWS EVERY ANGLE, EVERY LOOPHOLE IN THE LAW. WITH HIS AID A MAN CAN AVOID ALL EARTHLY PUNISHMENT FOR HIS CRIMES.



AND, BAEI CAN ALSO MAKE IT EASY FOR A MAN TO COMMIT A CRIME WITHOUT GETTING CAUGHT AT ALL! HE IS ONE OF THE GREATEST KINGS BELOW. HE HAS THE POWER TO RENDER INVISIBLE THOSE WHO SERVE HIM, AND—

WEIR! WILL YOU STOP TALKING ABOUT SUCH THINGS!



IT'S BAD ENOUGH TO LIVE IN THIS HOUSE KNOWING THAT IF I TRY TO ESCAPE, THAT HORRIBLE IMAGE WILL STRETCH OUT ITS FIENDISH CLAWS AND SEIZE ME! WHY MUST YOU CONSTANTLY TAUNT ME WITH YOUR POWER?



UNTIL NOW PRIDE MADE ME HIDE THE FACT THAT I MARRIED A MAN WHO BELONGED WITH THE DEMONS OF DARKNESS! I WAS AFRAID EVERYONE WOULD BELIEVE ME INSANE!



BUT—BUT I CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS!

YOU MUST OVERLOOK LADY LEONA'S BEHAVIOR, MR. WESTCOTT. SHE IS HIGH STRUNG. I THINK SHE IS JEALOUS OF MY HOBBY.

MAYBE SIR WEIR REALLY WANTS HIS WIFE TO BELIEVE THE IMAGE HAS SOME POWER OVER HER!



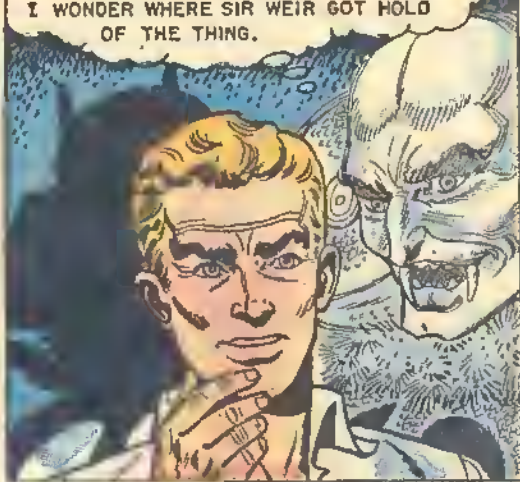


BY THE TIME BART WAS SHOWN TO HIS ROOM, HE HAD THE FEELING THAT THE SPIRIT OF BAEI PERVADED THE WHOLE HOUSE.



SIR WEIR MUST GET A KICK OUT OF SEEING WHAT EFFECT HIS TALK ABOUT BAEI WILL HAVE ON PEOPLE! BUT THERE REALLY WAS SOMETHING ABOUT THAT EVIL-LOOKING IMAGE THAT GOT ME! I WOULDN'T MIND OWNING IT MYSELF.

OF COURSE ALL THAT STUFF ABOUT BAEI'S POWERS IS SUPERSTITIOUS NONSENSE, BUT IT MAKES THE IMAGE MORE INTERESTING. I WONDER WHERE SIR WEIR GOT HOLD OF THE THING.



SIR WEIR HARTMAN KILLED A MAN TO SECURE THE IMAGE OF MY EVIL POWER, BART WESTCOTT! HE WAS A STRUGGLING YOUNG LAWYER AT THE TIME. THE MAN HE KILLED WAS A JUDGE, WHO IN TURN HAD KILLED FOR BAEI!



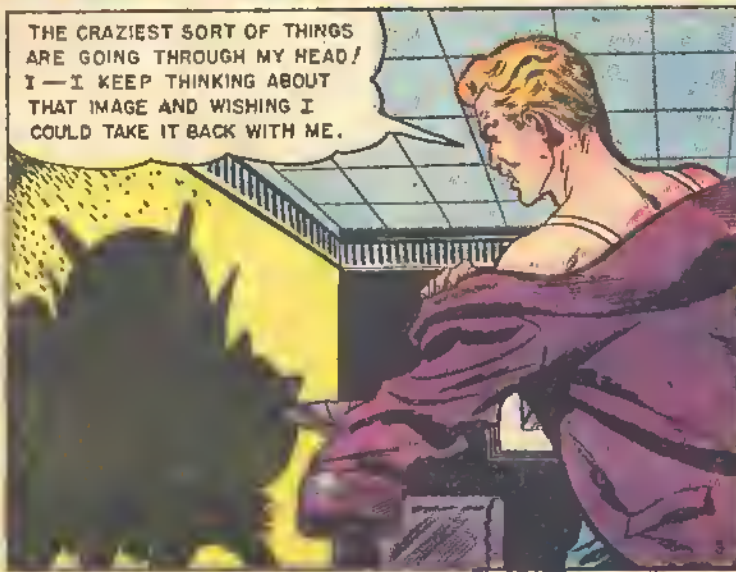
IT GOES BACK THOUSANDS OF YEARS, BART WESTCOTT! BEFORE THE DAYS OF BABYLON, MY IMAGE WAS WORSHIPPED BY THOSE WHO GAVE ME THEIR SOULS IN EXCHANGE FOR UNHOLY WISDOM AND POWER. DOWN THROUGH THE CENTURIES ONE MAN KILLS ANOTHER FOR ME, WHILE I FEAST ON THEIR SPIRITS!



THAT WHICH THE IMAGE ABSORBS, BECOMES THE IMAGE, BART. MY SHADOW HAS ALREADY FALLEN ACROSS YOU. IT IS THE ANCIENT CURSE OF THE UNHOLY IMAGE OF BAEI. IT BRINGS TO LIFE WHATEVER SECRET, RUTHLESS AMBITION DWELLS WITHIN A MAN'S HEART.



THE CRAZIEST SORT OF THINGS ARE GOING THROUGH MY HEAD! I—I KEEP THINKING ABOUT THAT IMAGE AND WISHING I COULD TAKE IT BACK WITH ME.





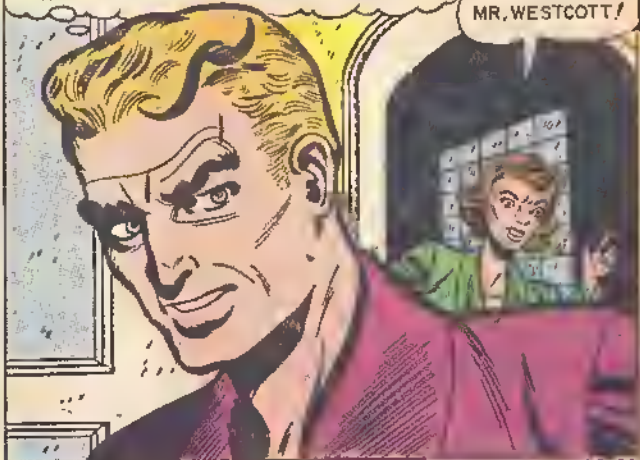
AS THOUGH LED BY A POWER BEYOND HIMSELF, BART WAS SEIZED WITH AN IMPULSE TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE IMAGE.

MAYBE I WON'T GET ANOTHER CHANCE TO SEE SIR WEIR'S COLLECTION AGAIN BEFORE I LEAVE IN THE MORNING... AND I WANT TO TAKE ONE MORE LOOK AT THAT IMAGE.



IF I COULD FIND ONE LIKE IT, IT WOULD BE A NICE SOUVENIR TO TAKE HOME. IT WOULD BE PRETTY IMPRESSIVE ON MY DESK. EVEN THE HEADS OF THE FIRM WOULD HAVE TO NOTICE A THING LIKE THAT!

MR. WESTCOTT!



BART WAS STARTLED WHEN LADY LEONA SUDDENLY DARTED OUT OF THE SHADOWS.

I—I WAS JUST COMING TO YOUR ROOM TO BEG YOU TO HELP ME!



YOU ARE A YOUNG LAWYER—I KNOW YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE RICH AND FAMOUS IN YOUR PROFESSION! MY HUSBAND'S FAME AND WEALTH CAME AFTER HE GOT THAT IMAGE OF BAE... I'VE FOUND THAT OUT SINCE WE WERE MARRIED!



BART WAS NOW SURE THAT HIS HOST'S BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WIFE WAS INSANE.

IF YOU SHOULD STEAL THE IMAGE, THE POWER IN IT WOULD BELONG TO YOU! SIR WEIR WILL EVEN BE UNABLE TO TAKE IT AWAY FROM YOU... BECAUSE THE DEVIL WITHIN THE IMAGE WORKS FOR WHOEVER POSSESSES IT!

YOU KNOW I COULDN'T STEAL, LADY LEONA... AND IT'S SILLY TO BELIEVE THOSE STORIES ABOUT ITS POWER!



BART COULD HARDLY BELIEVE HIS EYES AS HE SAW SIR WEIR SUDDENLY APPEAR AS THOUGH OUT OF THIN AIR, HOLDING THE IMAGE OF BAE IN ONE ARM.

YOU MUST BELIEVE ME... MUST DO AS I SAY! I CANNOT GO NEAR THE IMAGE OR IT WILL KILL ME, BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT MY HUSBAND HAS COMMANDED.

SIR WEIR!



SUDDENLY A CLOUD OF SMOKE POURED OUT OF THE IMAGE OF BAE THAT CHANGED INTO A GIGANTIC, LIVING HORROR REACHING FOR LADY LEONA!

MY WIFE FORGOT THAT THROUGH BAE I HAVE THE POWER TO BECOME INVISIBLE AND SPY UPON HER... NOW BAE WILL PUNISH HER FOR HER DISLOYALTY!

E E E W W!





**INSTINCTIVELY, BART TRIED TO ASSAULT THE MAN WHO HAD CAUSED THIS HORROR.**

OH, BAEI, I WHO POSSESS YOUR IMAGE, COMMAND YOU TO TEAR THIS WOMAN APART AND CONSUME HER. THEN DESTROY THE MAN WHO HAS LEARNED ALL MY SECRETS!

YOU DEVIL!

BART WESTCOTT... SAVE ME! SAVE YOURSELF! GRAB THE IMAGE FROM MY HUSBAND! AAAYAH!



BAEL... AGHHH! I CALL... MORE DEMONS—

AAARRGGH!



**THE OLDER MAN FOUGHT WITH DESPERATE FURY.**

(PUFF!) YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS, YOU INSOLENT YOUNG FOOL...! (PUFF!) DO YOU THINK I'LL GIVE UP LIFE AND POWER THIS EASILY...?

CAN'T LET HIM GET THE IMAGE BACK! GOT TO GET IT MYSELF! LEONA SAID... POWER BELONGED TO ONE WHO POSSESSED IT!



**SIR WEIR'S FINGERS HAD ALMOST REACHED THE IMAGE WHEN BART'S HANDS CLOSED AROUND HIS THROAT!**

AAARGHHH!



**BART GRABBED THE IMAGE JUST AS THE DEMONS SWARMED TOWARD HIM.**

GOT IT! HOPE—HOPE THIS WORKS FOR ME! BACK, YOU DEMONS! BAEI! I WHO NOW POSSESS YOUR IMAGE COMMAND YOU... SEND DEMONS BACK TO THE INFERNAL REGIONS! OBEY ME! RELEASE WOMAN... KEEP AWAY FROM ME... KEEP DEMONS AWAY!



IT—IT WORKED! THE—THE DEMONS SEEMED TO GO RIGHT BACK INTO THIS FIENDISH IMAGE! THE POWER BELONGS TO ME!

THE POWER OF BAEI IS NOW YOURS TO COMMAND, BART WESTCOTT... BUT IT IS TOO LATE TO SAVE THE WOMAN!

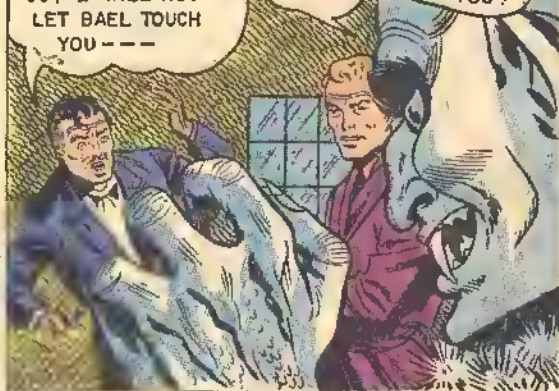
NO! NO! BAEI I COMMAND YOU! DESTROY THE YOUNG FOOL!





WESTCOTT...  
GIVE ME BACK  
THE IMAGE / YOU  
MAY YET SAVE  
YOURSELF. . .  
I WILL LET YOU  
GO / I WILL NOT  
LET BAEI TOUCH  
YOU ---

YOU NO LONGER COMMAND THE  
POWER OF BAEI, SIR WEIR!  
JUST AS YOU WRESTED MY  
IMAGE FROM THE ONE WHO  
POSSESSED IT BEFORE... SO  
HAS IT BEEN TAKEN FROM  
YOU!



IT IS TOO LATE, WEIR! WHOEVER POSSESSES  
THE IMAGE MAY NOT GIVE IT UP UNTIL IT IS TAKEN  
FROM HIM BY FORCE. WHOEVER  
LOSES THE IMAGE MAY NOT  
REGAIN IT! YOU NOW PAY  
FOR THE POWER YOU USED...  
YOU GO TO JOIN THOSE  
WHO USED IT BEFORE  
YOU!

NO! NO!...  
AGGHHH!



STOP! STOP!  
LET HIM GO,  
BAEI! I  
COMMAND IT!  
IT'S TOO  
HORRIBLE!

THIS ALONE YOU  
MAY NOT COMMAND!  
WHO LOSES THE  
POWER HE HAS  
GOTTEN FROM ME,  
IS CONSUMED BY ME  
FOREVER!



REVOLTED BY WHAT HE HAD  
SEEN, BART FLED ...

I—I CAN'T STAY!  
I CAN'T LISTEN!  
IT'S LIKE A  
NIGHTMARE!

A  
H  
H  
H  
Y  
A  
A!



I—I DON'T WANT THIS THING!  
I—I DON'T WANT ITS EVIL  
POWER... DEMONS OF BAEI,  
COME FORTH AND DESTROY  
THIS HOUSE AND YOUR MASTER  
AND YOURSELVES AND THE  
EVIL IMAGE SO THAT NONE MAY  
EVER AGAIN LEARN ITS  
DREAFOUL SECRET!



BART DID NOT PAUSE TO CHANGE  
CLOTHES BUT RAN OUT INTO THE NIGHT!

THE HOUSE... IT'S BURNING! I'M RID  
OF THE IMAGE! NOW IF I CAN ONLY RID  
MYSELF OF THE MEMORIES OF THIS NIGHT!  
WHO WOULD WANT FAME AND FORTUNE...  
WITH SUCH A PRICE INVOLVED?



BART FINALLY FOUND A CAB THAT TOOK HIM BACK  
TO HIS HOTEL ROOM THAT NIGHT. WHEN HE  
OPENED THE DOOR...

NO! IT  
CAN'T BE!

THE IMAGE BELONGS TO  
YOU NOW, BART. YOU TOOK IT  
FROM WEIR. DID YOU NOT HEAR ME  
TELL WEIR THAT WHOEVER POS-  
SESSES IT MAY NOT GIVE IT UP  
UNTIL ANOTHER TAKES IT  
FROM HIM!





**BART WENT BACK TO AMERICA. . . AND THE IMAGE WENT WITH HIM. FROM THAT MOMENT ON, EVERYTHING HE WANTED BECAME HIS. HIS FAME AS A LAWYER GREW AND HE HAD HIS OWN FIRM NOW.**

**THE JURY FREED SPIVEN M'COY, MR. WESTCOTT/ THAT WAS ONE CASE EVERYBODY THOUGHT YOU COULDN'T WIN/ BUT IT LOOKS AS THOUGH YOU JUST CAN'T LOSE!**



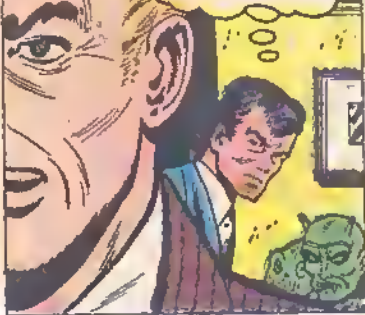
**NO, I CAN'T LOSE, JOHNSON. I HAVE A SOURCE OF EXCELLENT ADVICE THAT NEVER FAILS ME IN GETTING CRIMINALS ACQUITTED!**



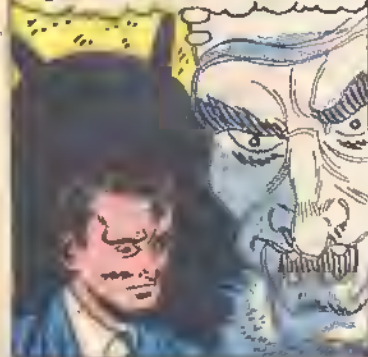
**I'VE OFTEN WONDERED ABOUT THAT IMAGE, MR. WESTCOTT! YOU LOOK AT IT A LOT. DOES IT BRING YOU GOOD LUCK OR SOMETHING?**

**WELL, IT HASN'T DONE BADLY BY ME, JOHNSON!**

**I'LL SAY IT HASN'T! HE MARRIED AN HETRESS... HE'S GOT BIG CARS AND A PENTHOUSE APARTMENT AND A COUNTRY HOME! I WISH I HAD A LITTLE OF WHAT HE HAS!**



**ALL THAT HE HAS MAY BE YOURS, JOHNSON. YOU ARE FALLING UNDER THE SPELL OF BAEI. BAEI'S SHADOW TOUCHES YOU EACH TIME YOU LOOK UPON THE IMAGE. WHY DON'T YOU WATCH YOUR BOSS AND SEE HOW HE GETS WHAT HE WANTS FROM ME?**



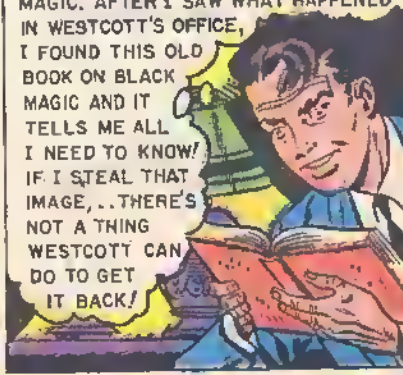
**BART HAD LONG SINCE CEASED TO REMEMBER THE CURSE OF THE UNHOLY IMAGE. HE FELT HE'D BE SMARTER THAN WEIR AND HANG ONTO THE POWER FOREVER.**

**MARGE THINKS I'M COMING BACK TO THE OFFICE TO WORK. BUT I NEED BAEI'S POWER TO MAKE ME INVISIBLE SO I CAN SPY ON HER. IF I WANT TO MARRY CHLOE, I'VE GOT TO GET EVIDENCE AGAINST MARGE.**



**IN THE MEANTIME, JOHNSON HAD SEEN AND HEARD SOME UNBELIEVABLE THINGS WHEN HE LOOKED THROUGH A CRACK IN THE DOOR TO HIS EMPLOYER'S PRIVATE OFFICE.**

**THAT IMAGE HAS POWERS OF BLACK MAGIC. AFTER I SAW WHAT HAPPENED IN WESTCOTT'S OFFICE, I FOUND THIS OLD BOOK ON BLACK MAGIC AND IT TELLS ME ALL I NEED TO KNOW! IF I STEAL THAT IMAGE, ..THERE'S NOT A THING WESTCOTT CAN DO TO GET IT BACK!**



**THE NIGHT JOHNSON DECIDED TO STEAL THE IMAGE WAS THE NIGHT WESTCOTT RETURNED TO THE OFFICE.**

**YOU DIRTY THIEF! PUT THAT IMAGE DOWN! HOW DARE YOU! I'LL LET THE POLICE DEAL WITH YOU!**

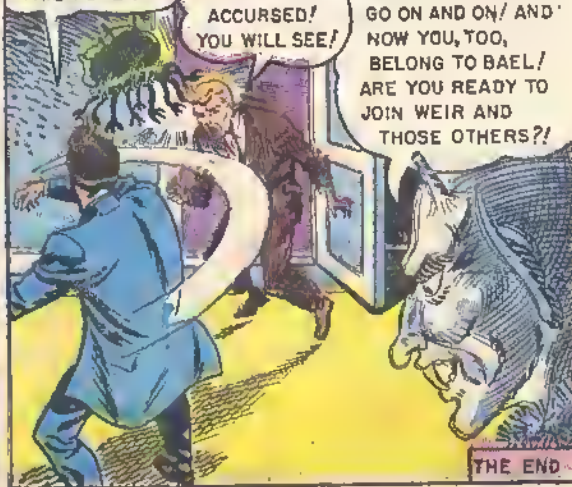
**OH, NO YOU WON'T! I-I KNOW YOUR SECRET!**



**IT'S GOING TO BE MINE. . . THIS POWER. . .**

**AARGH! . . .FOOL! IT IS ACCURSED! YOU WILL SEE!**

**AH, YES, BART, JOHNSON WILL SEE! BUT THE CURSE WILL GO ON AND ON! AND NOW YOU, TOO, BELONG TO BAEI! ARE YOU READY TO JOIN WEIR AND THOSE OTHERS?!**



**THE END**



# A Hand of FATE Mystery

#30

NEARLY ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, WHEN THE BALKAN COUNTRIES OF EUROPE WERE RULED BY DESPOTIC ROYALTY, AN ADVENTURE IN THE REALM OF THE SUPERNATURAL OCCURRED. ONE NIGHT THE LORD OF A CASTLE IN HUNGARY SAT BROODINGLY DRINKING WINE. AT HIS SIDE STOOD A GYPSY FIDDLER PLAYING HIS SAD MUSIC. SUDDENLY

ENOUGH OF THESE FUNERAL DIRGES, GYPSY! PLAY SOMETHING GAY AND MELODIC. I WISH TO DANCE!

YES, MY LORD, AS YOU WISH.



THE GYPSY'S FIDDLE SUDDENLY BURST FORTH WITH A RIBALD, PULSE-THROBBING TUNE. THE BARON, CAUGHT UP IN THE TEMPO OF THE MUSIC, DANCED MADLY ABOUT THE ROOM! SOON HE LOST CONTROL OF HIS SENSES

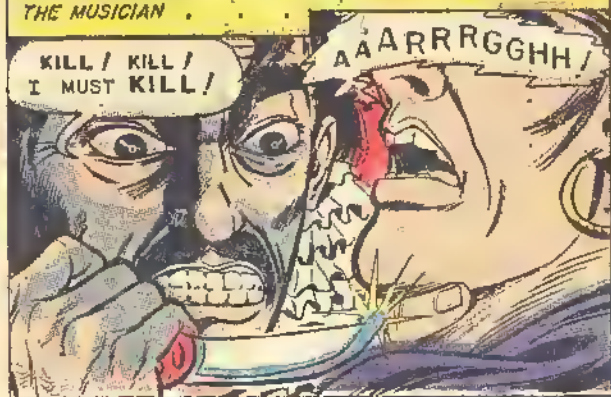
THE MUSIC! IT'S TOO MUCH...! STOP! STOP! I'M GOING MAD...!



WITH HIS BRAIN REELING, THE BARON LUNGED AT THE MUSICIAN

KILL! KILL! I MUST KILL!

AAARRRGHH!



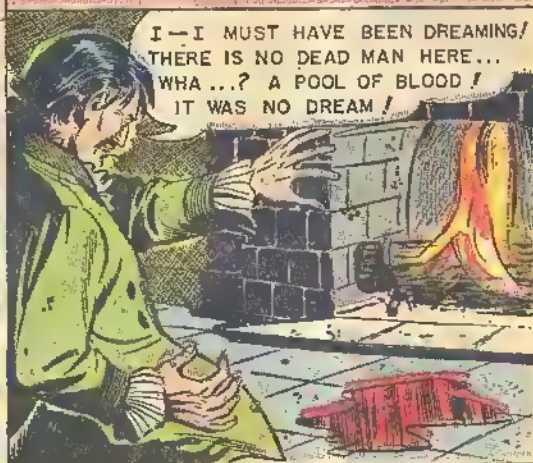
SUDDENLY, THE HAUNTING MUSIC OF A GYPSY FIDDLE WAS HEARD

AAIII! THE MUSIC! I MUST DANCE... HA HA! HA HA!



THE NEXT MORNING, THE BARON AWOKED FROM HIS DRUNKEN STUPOR AND RUSHED TO THE ROOM WHERE THE ORGY OF THE PAST NIGHT HAD TAKEN PLACE

I—I MUST HAVE BEEN DREAMING! THERE IS NO DEAD MAN HERE... WHA...? A POOL OF BLOOD! IT WAS NO DREAM!



THE SERVANTS RUSHED INTO THE ROOM WHEN THEY HEARD THE INSANE LAUGHTER. THEY FOUND THE BARON PRANCING MADLY ABOUT THE ROOM TO EERIE MUSIC THAT HAD NO SOURCE. THE BARON'S MIND WAS GONE AND HE WAS SEALED IN THE ROOM UNTIL HIS DEATH. LONG AFTER THE MADMAN'S DEMISE, THE SOUNDS OF A GYPSY FIDDLE COULD STILL BE HEARD. THE POOL OF BLOOD STILL REMAINS, AFTER REPEATED ATTEMPTS TO ERASE IT, AS A TESTIMONIAL TO THE CREDIBILITY OF THE STRANGE ADVENTURE!

THE END



# CURSE OF THE SAPPHIRE FIEND



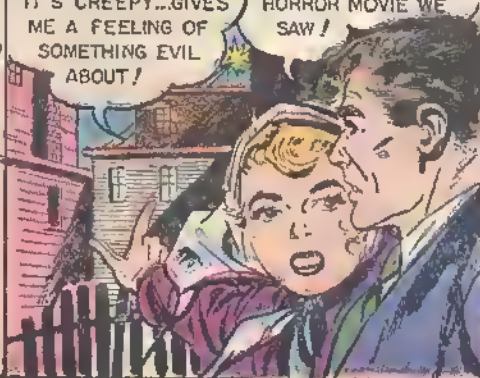
DO YOU CRAVE JEWELS,  
MADAME? DO YOU LIKE SAPPHIRES?  
CAN YOU FIND SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE  
ABLE TO PAY THE PRICE OF SOMETHING  
VERY RARE AND PRECIOUS? THEN  
BEWARE . . . ! YOU MAY  
MEET ME ANY DAY!

MARY AND JOHN DUNCAN WERE JUST TWO PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN A SHABBY NEIGHBORHOOD AND WHOSE ONLY ESCAPE FROM REALITY WAS A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES. IF ANYONE HAD TOLD THEM THE ANCIENTS BELIEVED THAT EACH PLANET RULED OVER CERTAIN PRECIOUS STONES AND THAT A SPIRIT WITHIN THE GEM WIELDED MAGIC POWER, MARY AND JOHN WOULD HAVE LAUGHED. BUT NO ONE TOLD THEM. MARY AND JOHN WERE THE KIND WHO FIND THINGS OUT FOR THEMSELVES!

IT ALL BEGAN ON THE NIGHT OF SEPTEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>. THE DUNCANS WERE RETURNING FROM THE MOVIES

LOOK, JOHN! I NEVER SAW A STAR LIKE THAT BEFORE! IT'S CREEPY...GIVES ME A FEELING OF SOMETHING EVIL ABOUT!

IT MAKES ME FEEL THE SAME WAY! MAYBE IT WAS THAT HORROR MOVIE WE SAW!



IF MARY AND JOHN HAD STUDIED ASTROLOGY THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORRIED, BECAUSE THIS WAS THE HOUR OF THE TRANSIT OF MARS THROUGH SCORPIO...AND AN EVIL POWER WAS SEEKING OUT ITS OWN!

WHAT AN AWFUL SCREAM! SOMEBODY NEEDS HELP!

MAYBE IT WOULD BE BETTER TO CALL THE POLICE AND NOT GET INVOLVED!





As they approached the spot from which the scream seemed to have come, an unbelievable and terrifying scene met their eyes...



EEEEKKK!  
JOHN! W-WHAT IS IT!

L-LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

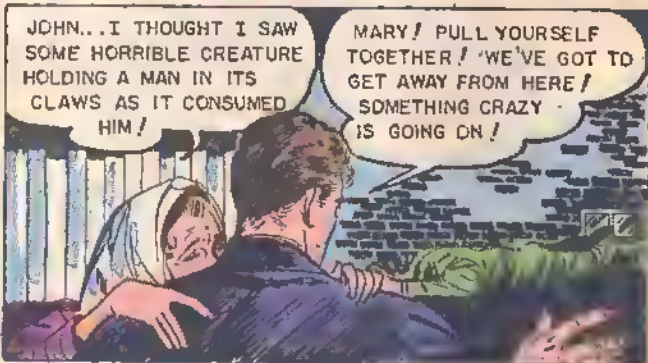
As Mary fainted, John seemed unable to move.



WE—WE MUST HAVE IMAGINED WE SAW THAT THING! IT—IT'S JUST A MAN... IN SOME KIND OF FUNNY, FOREIGN CLOTHES!

JOHN... I THOUGHT I SAW SOME HORRIBLE CREATURE HOLDING A MAN IN ITS CLAWS AS IT CONSUMED HIM!

MARY! PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER! WE'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM HERE! SOMETHING CRAZY IS GOING ON!



I SEEMED TO SEE A MAN IN YELLOW ROBES AND A TURBAN ...AND NOW THERE'S NO ONE! JUST THIS HORRIBLY MUTILATED BODY!

I SAW THE SAME THING YOU DID! BUT WHO WOULD BELIEVE US? IT ISN'T THE KIND OF STORY YOU COULD EVEN TELL THE POLICE!



LOOK! HE'S GOT SOME KIND OF JEWEL IN HIS HAND! IT—IT'S A BEAUTIFUL THING!

LET'S GET AWAY FROM HERE... AND LET SOMEBODY ELSE FIND HIM! I DON'T WANT ANY PART OF WHATEVER HAPPENED!

MAYBE WHAT WE SAW WAS A ROBBERY AND MURDER... AND THE MAN WHO DID IT MANAGED TO GET AWAY AS YOU FAINTED!

WHY DIDN'T THE MURDERER TAKE THE JEWEL? WHY SHOULD WE LEAVE IT HERE? IT'S JUST AS THOUGH WE FOUND IT... REALLY---

MARY! THIS ISN'T LIKE YOU! YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND! YOU CAN'T TAKE THAT!

CAN'T I? WATCH ME! THERE'S NO REASON WHY WE SHOULD LEAVE IT HERE FOR SOMEBODY ELSE TO TAKE!





WHEN THEY GOT HOME THAT NIGHT JOHN BECAME DISTURBED AT THE TRAIT IN MARY HE HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE...

OH, YOU BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL THING! I KNOW YOU'RE WORTH A FORTUNE! JOHN, IT'S CARVED ON ONE SIDE... SOME KIND OF FUNNY LITTLE CRAB!

IT'S A SCORPION! LIKE THAT EVIL MONSTER WE BOTH THOUGHT WE SAW TONIGHT! YOU'D BETTER GET RID OF THAT, MARY!

THAT WAS JUST OUR IMAGINATION! I'VE NEVER HAD ANYTHING SO BEAUTIFUL IN MY LIFE... AND I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU OR ANYONE ELSE TAKE IT AWAY FROM ME!

I HOPE BY MORNING YOU'LL COME TO YOUR SENSES!

JOHN WENT WEARILY TO BED BUT MARY COULD NOT TEAR HERSELF AWAY FROM HER TREASURE. AS SHE GAZED INTO ITS GLEAMING DEPTHS...

W-WHAT'S HAPPENING? IT MOVED IN MY HAND! SOMETHING IS COMING OUT --- EEEEEKKK! WHAT AN UGLY HORRIBLE THING!

AS THE STRANGE CRAWLING THING EMERGED FROM THE GEM, MARY TRIED DESPERATELY TO SHAKE OFF ITS CLINGING PINCERS...

UGH! I CAN'T SHAKE IT OFF! AND IT'S GROWING...! AGGGHHH...

AS THE GLITTERING GEM FELL FROM MARY'S TERROR-PARALYZED ARM, THE STEADILY GROWING CREATURE ALSO DROPPED TO THE FLOOR...

EEEEOWWW! I'M FREE OF IT! BUT--BUT I CAN'T MOVE! IT--IT'S THE THING JOHN AND I THOUGHT WE IMAGINED! I--I'M HELD IN ITS POWER! --- WHAT ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

BEFORE MARY'S HORRIFIED EYES, THE CREATURE ROSE TO A STANDING POSTURE AND APPEARED IN ROBE AND TURBAN.

I AM MARS NERGA, THE SPIRIT THAT RULES THE GEM YOU STOLE FROM THE DEAD MAN. ONCE EACH YEAR WHEN THE INFLUENCE OF MY CONTROLLING STAR REACHES ME, I MAY EMERGE AND CLAIM A VICTIM TO FEAST UPON!

YOU ARE FORTUNATE THAT I HAVE ALREADY CLAIMED MY VICTIM AND CONSUMED WHAT I WANTED OF HIS BODY AND SOUL!

YOU--YOU ARE THE ONE WHO KILLED THAT MAN! AND THEN... YOU DISAPPEARED!

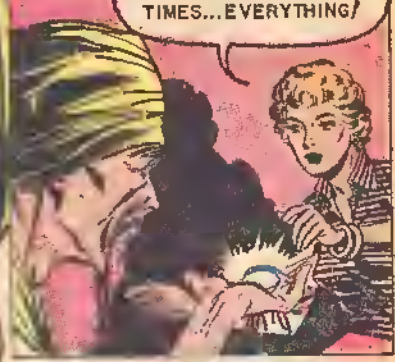


I MERELY WENT BACK INTO THE GEM THAT IMPRISONS ME! THE MAN WAS AS UNFORTUNATE AS YOU ARE LUCKY. HE PICKED TONIGHT OF ALL NIGHTS TO STEAL THE SAPPHIRE FROM LADY ADHURST, WHO WAS ITS TEMPORARY POSSESSOR!

HE HAD TO MURDER LADY ADHURST TO GET IT! BUT IF HE HAD WAITED A SINGLE HOUR, LADY ADHURST WOULD HAVE BEEN MY VICTIM.... AND HE COULD HAVE PICKED ME UP AS EASILY AS YOU DID.

NOW THAT I HAVE HAD MY YEARLY FEAST, THE PLANET THAT RELEASED ME HAS GONE ITS WAY. UNTIL ITS YEARLY RETURN, I AM THE SLAVE OF WHOEVER POSSESSES THE GEM I INHABIT. HERE...THE SAPPHIRE AND ALL IT BRINGS IS NOW YOURS! IT IS IN MY POWER TO BRING YOU WHATEVER YOU WISH!

I—I WISH EVERYTHING! MONEY, GOOD TIMES...EVERYTHING!



WHEN MARY'S FINGERS CLOSED AROUND THE JEWEL, MARS NERGAL DISAPPEARED... AND IT WAS HARD TO BELIEVE SHE HAD ACTUALLY GONE THROUGH SUCH AN EXPERIENCE.

MARY STARED INTO THE SPARKLING GEM, BUT SHE COULD NOT SEE THE AGONIZED FIGURES FROM THE PAST THAT GAVE IT FLAMING LIFE...OR HEAR THE SINISTER, WARNING VOICES.

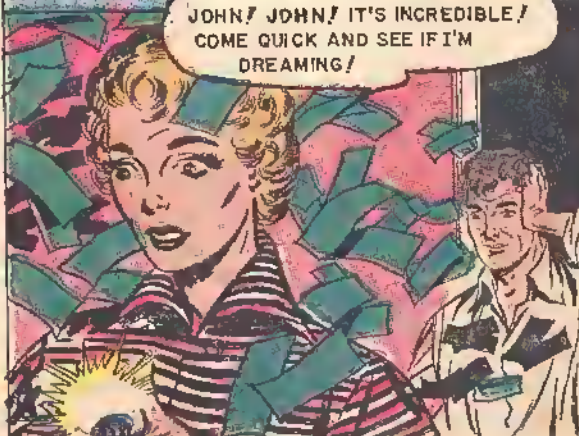
INCREDIBLE! IS THAT CREATURE REALLY IN THE JEWEL? I—I SEE NOTHING NOW BUT ITS DAZZLING BEAUTY AND THE CARVED SCORPION!



YOU WILL FIND OUT WHAT WE FOUND OUT... TOO LATE... TOO LATE!

BUT AT THAT MOMENT MARY'S WISHES BEGAN TO COME TRUE... AND WHY SHOULD SHE BOTHER ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE?

JOHN! JOHN! IT'S INCREDIBLE! COME QUICK AND SEE IF I'M DREAMING!



JOHN! IT—IT'S CRAZY BUT IT'S TRUE! THERE'S MAGIC IN THE JEWEL! WE CAN HAVE ANYTHING WE WANT! MANSIONS, CLOTHES, ANYTHING! NOW DO YOU WANT ME TO GET RID OF THE SAPPHIRE?



NO! NO!



THE NEXT MORNING THE NEWSPAPERS HAD PART OF THE STORY OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED THE NIGHT BEFORE...

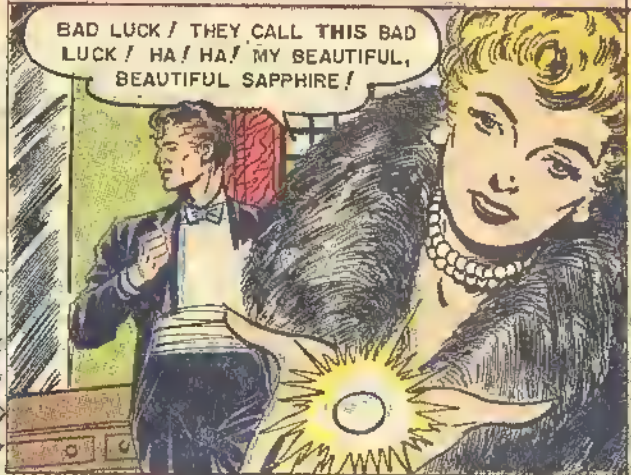
**LADY ADHURST FOUND MURDERED!  
HISTORIC YELLOW SAPPHIRE MISSING**

Priceless gem once owned by Caesar Borgia has brought bad luck and tragedy to all those who possessed it since ancient times. Suspected jewel thief's mutilated body found, but no trace of stolen treasure.

**Reds Free H**

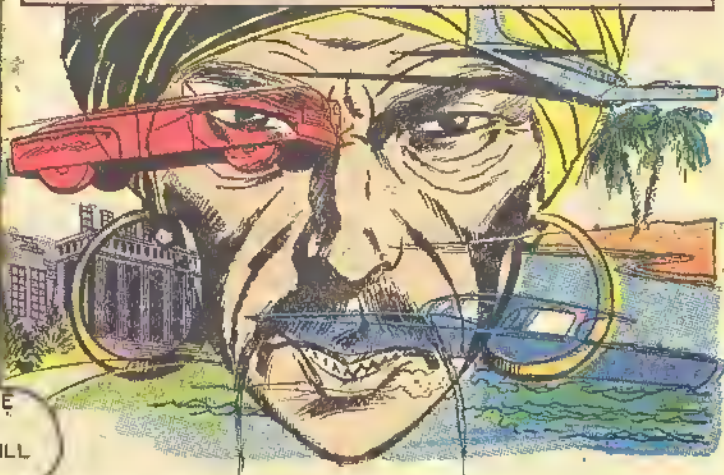
BUT IN A LUXURIOUS PENTHOUSE SUITE IN THE RITZBILT TOWERS WHERE THEY HAD MOVED EARLY THAT MORNING, MARY AND JOHN WEREN'T BOTHERED.

BAD LUCK! THEY CALL THIS BAD LUCK! HA! HA! MY BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL SAPPHIRE!



LOOK CLOSER AT YOUR BEAUTIFUL GEM, MARY! LOOK AND LISTEN! BUT YOU SEE AND HEAR NOTHING BUT WHAT YOU DESIRE!

THE WEEKS AND MONTHS RUSHED BY, OPENING UP A WONDERFUL NEW WORLD TO MARY AND JOHN ---A WORLD IN WHICH EVERYTHING THEY WANTED WAS UNBELIEVABLY THEIRS.



WHICH OF YOU WILL THE SAPPHIRE FIEND FEED UPON TO ADD NEW SPARKLE TO THE FLAMES WITHIN THE GEM? ONE YEAR FROM LAST NIGHT, ONE OF YOU WILL JOIN OUR BAND, JOHN AND MARY!

THAT UGLY THING WITHIN YOU DOESN'T SEEM TO MATTER ANY MORE. I'VE NEVER SEEN IT AGAIN! IT'S GIVEN US EVERYTHING WE WANT, BUT I'M NOT EVEN SURE IT'S IN THE JEWEL ANY LONGER!

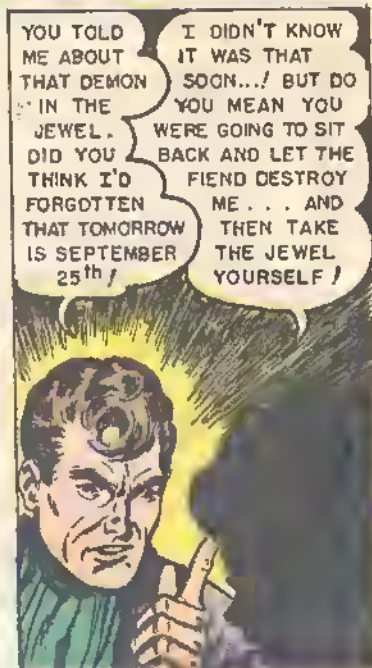
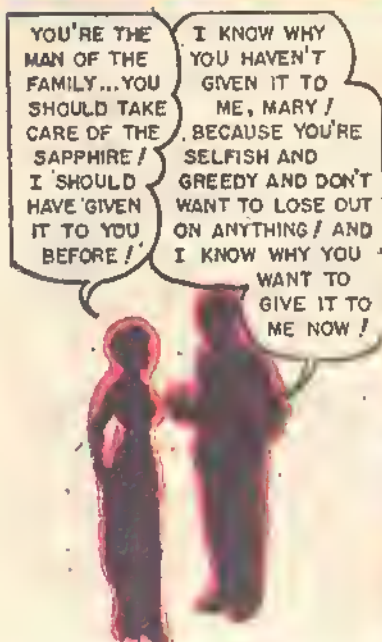
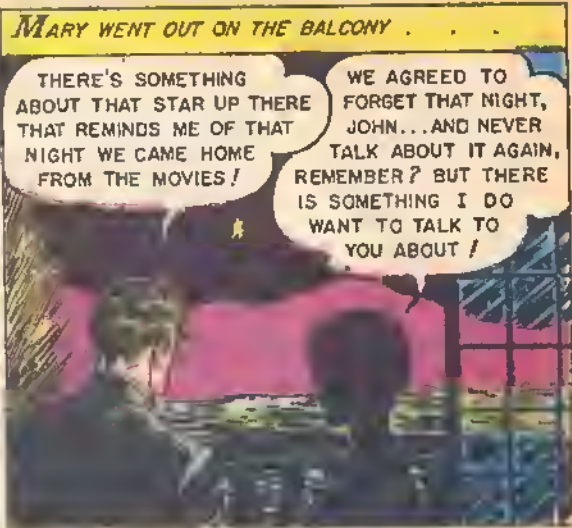
OH, I'M THERE, MARY. BELIEVE ME, I'M THERE!

IT'S ALMOST SEPTEMBER 25<sup>th</sup> AGAIN... AND IF THERE IS SOMETHING IN THE GEM THAT COMES OUT EACH YEAR TO FEAST UPON WHOEVER POSSESSES IT AT THE MOMENT... IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR IT TO COME OUT!

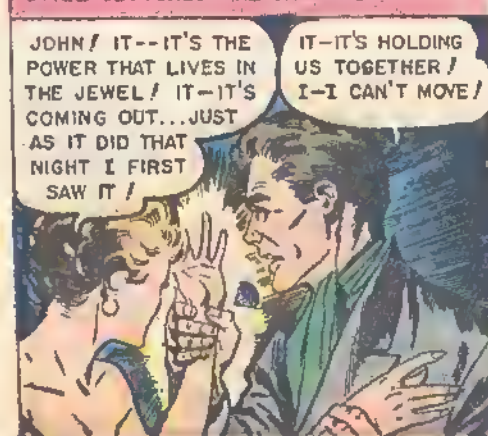


THAT'S RIGHT, MARY!





AS JOHN GRABBED MARY'S UPRaised FISTS, SHE FELT A MOVEMENT IN THE HAND THAT STILL CLUTCHED THE SAPPHIRE!





THIS IS THE MOMENT MARS NERGAL ENJOYS THE FEAST THAT RENEWS THE LIFE AND LUSTER OF THE JEWEL HE GOVERNS! SINCE AT THE MOMENT I WAS RELEASED, YOU WERE BOTH TOUCHING THE JEWEL... YOU BOTH BELONG TO ME!

HEH! HEH! BOTH OF YOU! IT IS WELL! INDEED, THIS WAS A SPLENDID CATCH!

I—I CAN'T MOVE! I CAN'T BREATHE! IT—IT'S AS THOUGH WE WERE IN A GLASS COFFIN SURROUNDED BY HORRIBLE FLAMES! WE—WE'RE BURNING...

HEH! HEH! YOU'LL GET USED TO IT! WE ARE THE LIFE OF THE JEWEL! WE FURNISH THE GLITTER THAT MADE YOU COVET IT!

WE ALL BELONG TO THE SOULLESS DEAD WHO POSSESSED THE SAPPHIRE AND ARE NOW POSSESSED BY IT! ONLY THROUGH US DOES IT LIVE... AND WE CAN NEVER ESCAPE! WE ARE DOOMED FOR ETERNITY!

LATER IN THE VILLA THE DUNCANS HAD OCCUPIED...

WE FOUND THEM LIKE THIS! IT WAS HORRIBLE! AS THOUGH THEY'D BEEN ATTACKED BY SOMETHING OUT OF THIS WORLD!

IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN ROBBERY. NOTHING SEEMS TO BE DISTURBED!

WHEN THE POLICE HAD GONE...

THIS SAPPHIRE WE FOUND BETWEEN THE BOODIES! NO SENSE IN TELLING THE POLICE ABOUT IT...OR ABOUT THE STRANGE FIGURE THAT DISAPPEARED!

WE MUST HAVE IMAGINED IT! A STRANGE CREATURE ...THEN SOMEONE IN A ROBE AND TURBAN. THEN NOTHING! BUT THE SAPPHIRE! LET'S KEEP IT, GIBBS! IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL!

KEEP IT...OR SELL IT, MY FRIENDS! I WILL STILL FIND NEW LIFE FOR MY JEWEL... AND MYSELF! PERHAPS I'LL BE SEEING YOU, EH?

THE END



# RETURN of the ICE VAMPIRE

Thor Gustaffson heard the voices above him. He tried to open his eyes to see who was speaking, but he couldn't. Something was weighing him down, a great weight, so that he could not move at all.

"He's perfectly preserved," he heard someone say. "The body's probably been lying here for ten years, and yet there's no sign of decomposition!"

They were talking about him, Thor realized. Fools, he thought. Didn't they know that he was indestructible, that he could not die? What they thought was his body was merely he, alive, in a suspended state of animation. Hot anger ran through him as he thought of the way he'd been betrayed, brought to this condition. He wanted to raise his arms and tear and destroy and avenge himself, but yet the weight upon him kept him silent. They were talking again above him—two men, he knew.

"Let's get him off this mountain," one of them said. "The glacial ice has kept him perfectly preserved. This find could make medical history!"

Thor felt himself raised gradually onto some sort of carrying device. The mention of the glacier caused him to remember what had happened—to him it seemed only yesterday.

His brother Jan had discovered what he was. It had happened quite accidentally. They had been mountain climbing that day and had gone too high and gotten lost. High up there on the lonely, deserted mountain, he had felt the uncontrollable need for blood, the overpowering urge to kill. He'd been far from the Swiss chalet where they lived, too far from any living habitation so that he could sate his need and hide the ravaged body of his victim from discovery.

So he had waited impatiently till dark, while the little blood he had turned to water and his throat was dry and burning with the need for drink. He had waited until his brother Jan had gone to bed, and then softly, quickly he had crept to Jan's side, leaned over him, his teeth bared to sink into the sleeping man's neck.

"Thor! What are you doing! Have you gone mad?" The shout had come from his brother, as some sixth sense had caused him to open his eyes.

Jan had sprung up and twisted away, and snarling, uttering animal noises, Thor had been upon him. But Jan was older, heavier, stronger. Desperately he'd struggled, for now, in addition

to his need for blood was the realization that Jan must be destroyed. Now that Jan knew what he was, he would never be safe so long as Jan lived. But in the end Jan had overcome him, and he had lain bound hand and foot while Jan questioned him.

"Why, why are you this way? How long has it gone on? How many have you killed?"

His brother's questions rolled over him while he lay silent, hate filling his heart, no answer surging to his lips. What could he say. How stupid explanations would be when there weren't any to give! He had been the one to inherit the disease that festered in their family.

Finally when morning came, Jan had left him there. He'd taken away his warm clothing, his boots, anything that would help him survive in this world of ice.

"No matter what you are," Jan had said, "I cannot bring myself to kill you. I am going to leave you here, to the mercy of the elements. Without these means of survival, nature will kill you. It will be easy to convince the villagers that in our climbing you lost your footing and fell into some deep chasm where your body now lies."

So Jan had left him, bound hand and foot, and Jan had walked away. It was later that night that he heard the huge, breaking sound of glacial ice, and shortly thereafter it descended upon him, burying him beneath its weight. And so he had lain these ten years, knowing that he was indestructible, knowing that someday his release would come, and that his revenge would come. And now the ice had shifted once again, leaving him free at last to seek that revenge. . . .

Thor's reverie ended as he felt himself lifted from the stretcher onto a smooth, marble slab. This would be the morgue, he knew, and there would be others here, bloodless ones who would not serve his purpose.

"We'll leave him here till tomorrow," he heard one of his rescuers say. "Then we'll phone Dr. Turk to join us and we'll dissect the body."

"Sounds like an excellent suggestion," someone agreed.

Thor had to control the corners of his mouth. The frigid state of his body was leaving him and in another hour he knew he would be able to move freely. By morning, he mused, there would be additional corpses that could be dissected in the



laboratory—and foremost would be that of his brother Jan! When he, himself, was found missing in the morning, he knew they would merely assume that someone had stolen his corpse.

It was exactly an hour later, in the darkened, silent, motionless morgue that Thor Gustaffson raised himself from his slab. He stood there for a moment, feeling the delight of movement after these long years of immobility, and then he left the surge for blood rise up in him. Quickly he surveyed his mountain clothes, checking to see whether they'd withstood the ravages of time and ice. The material was good, and his outfit was in order.

His first thought was to sate his hunger, and as he slowly opened the door, his eyes lit upon a young nurse coming down the hall, carrying a tray to some patient's room. He had almost decided to spring upon her when caution and his need for revenge told him otherwise.

A struggle might bring someone running, and then there would be a hue and cry. Better to control himself a little longer, make sure that he would be safe. It was Jan that he would sate this long-starved thirst with. It was Jan who could reveal to everyone what he was.

He knew the hospital was only a short distance from the chalet—if his brother still lived there. And if he knew Jan, he was not one to move around much.

Thor Gustaffson slipped down the silent corridors that were now safe in the late of the night and walked outside. The night was crisp with the winter's air, and a bright moon lit his way, and he struck off in the direction of the chalet. True to his surmise, when he approached it, he saw the lights that burned within it. It had not been boarded up. Jan was still there.

He slipped past the gates that protected the estate and headed toward the downstairs floor. A light was burning in the library, and the drapes had not been drawn. Standing there beneath the window, his fist clenched as fury rose in him again. All these years while he had lain frozen and helpless, all this luxury had been his brother's.

Jan sat lounging in a chair close to the fireplace, a book in his hand, the picture of comfort. And as Thor watched, the door to the library opened, and a beautiful girl with gold hair, dressed in a white velvet robe, stood there.

"Jan darling, aren't you going to bed?" The sound of her voice came to Thor through the half-opened French door.

"No," Jan said. "I feel a bit restless tonight. I think I might stroll around the grounds for awhile, maybe go down to the village. I'll be back soon."

She pouted slightly, and then said, "Well, don't be gone too long. I'll miss you."

Good, Thor thought. It would not be necessary for him to enter the chalet and possibly cause an alarm. He could lie in wait here until Jan came out, and then—

It was just five minutes later that Jan came through the French doors. Thor let him pass, hugging back into the shadows, lurking behind him as he walked briskly down the path of the estate. Jan was carrying a walking stick, a sharp pointed one that he swung in his hand idly as he walked.

Jan was halfway down the path when Thor spoke to him.

"Greetings, brother," he said softly.

As Jan whirled around, Thor stood waiting for him in a half animal-like crouch. He knew that the surprise of seeing him would throw his brother off guard, and he wanted the delight of savoring that moment of fear on Jan's part before he killed him. And then the chalet, and Jan's lovely wife—all of it would be his.

Slowly Jan came toward him. "So you are alive," he said slowly. "I knew later that you could not be dead. And even if you don't believe me, I'm glad you're back. I want to talk to you—"

Thor waited to hear no more of his brother's conversation. He didn't intend to be taken prisoner again. With a guttural cry he sprang, and once more, as ten years before, they were struggling together.

But then, suddenly, Thor went rigid with shock. For he realized with shocking clarity what his brother wanted of him. It was not to take him prisoner again—it was not to kill him—but . . . With hypnotized eyes he watched Jan's face come closer and closer to him, watched the bared teeth of his brother come closer and closer to his throat! This vile insanity that festered in their family had claimed his brother, too! Now his brother, too, slipped out in the dead of night to quench his ever-present thirst and prey on unwary strollers.

With an inarticulate cry he flung Jan from him. Jan fell backward, his arms flailing in all directions, and then as he twisted, he screamed with agony as he was impaled upon the point of his walking stick.

Thor looked desperately around him. He knew that the scream would attract attention. He started to run swiftly down the path to the gates, but when he got there, they were closed. Behind him he heard servants coming, and desperately he tried to think of a way out of his predicament, and quickly he tried to vault the iron gate that surrounded the estate. His jump was just short of success, and with a scream he, too, succumbed to death as the iron picket impaled him.

And thus they found Thor Gustaffson that evening, a man whom they'd thought ten years dead, and they watched his life's blood ebb finally away, and they wondered.



# THE NIGHT OF

# FRIDAY



THE NIGHT OF FRIDAY THE 13TH BEGAN MUCH LIKE ANY OTHER NIGHT. I'M ALWAYS BUSY AND SELDOM HAVE TIME TO WASTE LOITERING AROUND. FORTUNATELY, I HAVE LISTS TO REMIND ME OF THE THINGS THAT MUST BE DONE.

*I KNEW THAT I WAS EXPECTED AT THE MORGANSON MANSION. I HAD BEEN ADVISED THAT RICH OLD WINTHROP MORGANSON WAS RAPIDLY APPROACHING THE END THAT MUST COME TO ALL MORTALS... AND I KNEW THAT THE ONLY PERSON WHO WOULD REGRET HIS DEPARTURE FROM THIS EARTH WAS HIMSELF!*

*WHEN I REACHED THE MORGANSON HOME I FOUND GATHERED AROUND OLD WINTHROP'S BEDSIDE ALL THE PEOPLE WHO WERE MOST INTERESTED IN HIS PASSING. THEY WERE WAITING FOR ME--DEATH--TO TAKE HIM FROM THEM...*

WINTHROP'S NIECE JUDY EXPECTS TO INHERIT HIS FORTUNE. THAT'S WHY COUNT MANFRIED MARRIED HER... JUST AS SHE MARRIED HIM FOR HIS TITLE! BUT EVEN THE DOCTORS AND THE LAWYERS SEEM ANXIOUS TO GET THIS THING OVER WITH!

IN A MATTER OF SECONDS HIS HEART WILL STOP BEATING AND WINTHROP MORGANSON WILL BE DEAD!

*Lee Campbell*



POOR WINTHROP DIDN'T  
KNOW HOW TO RELAX. IF HE  
HAD LISTENED TO ME HE COULD  
HAVE LIVED MANY MORE YEARS...  
BUT HE WOULDN'T STOP WORKING.  
HE HATED TO TAKE EVEN A FEW  
HOURS OFF TO ENJOY HIMSELF!

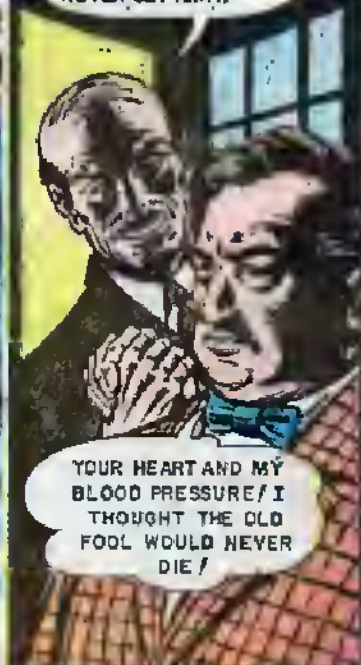


THAT'S TOO BAD /  
EVERYONE IS ENTITLED  
TO A FEW HOURS OFF.

THAT SHOULD BE A LESSON  
TO US, SIMON. WITH THE FEE  
THAT WE CAN COLLECT AS THE  
EXECUTORS OF WINTHROP'S  
ESTATE, WE OUGHT TO LEAVE  
RIGHT AFTER HIS DEATH!



RIGHT, ALBERT? A TOUR OR  
A CRUISE IS EXACTLY WHAT WE  
NEED. MY HEART HAS BEEN  
BAD FOR YEARS... BUT  
WINTHROP WAS ALWAYS WANTING  
SOMETHING AND WE COULD  
NEVER GET AWAY.



YOUR HEART AND MY  
BLOOD PRESSURE! I  
THOUGHT THE OLD  
FOOL WOULD NEVER  
DIE!

ALL THOSE VACATIONS UNCLE  
PASSED UP AND ALL THE HOURS HE  
DIDN'T TAKE OFF--THEY HELPED  
PILE UP MORE DOLLARS FOR US  
TO SPEND HAVING THE KIND OF  
FUN HE DISAPPROVED OF!



AND NO ONE SUSPECTS THAT THE  
ARSENIC WE ADDED TO HIS NIGHTLY  
MILK IS SENDING HIM ON A LONG  
VACATION INDEED! NOW HE'LL  
RELAX...IN HIS GRAVE!



AND YOU DO NOT SUS-  
PECT, MY SILLY WIFE,  
THAT AS SOON AS HE IS  
DEAD, YOU TOO WILL DIE!  
WITH YOUR FORTUNE, I  
CAN REPAIR MY  
ANCESTRAL CASTLE  
AND LIVE IN GRAND  
STYLE!

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT /  
WINTHROP HAD REACHED THE  
POINT OF DRAWING HIS LAST  
BREATH... AND YET, HE  
LINGERS----



EVEN THE DOCTOR  
IS ANXIOUS TO GET  
THINGS OVER AND  
GO ON A FISHING  
TRIP!



COME TO THINK OF IT, I'VE NEVER HAD ANY TIME OFF MYSELF. LIKE WINTHROP... I'VE ALWAYS BEEN TOO BUSY. IT MIGHT NOT BE A BAD IDEA TO SEE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE! EVEN JUST A FEW HOURS OFF WOULD BE A CHANGE.

I'VE NEVER DONE ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE — NEVER LET ANYTHING INTERFERE WITH BUSINESS... BUT MAYBE WINTHROP AND I BOTH DESERVE A FEW HOURS TO OURSELVES.

YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT, MY DEAR. THERE'S NO REASON FOR US TO WASTE ANY MORE TIME. NOTHING CAN POSSIBLY INTERFERE OR CHANGE THE ENDING NOW.

THIS IS GETTING MONOTONOUS! HE'S BOUND TO DIE ANY MINUTE! THERE'S NO SENSE STANDING AROUND HERE!

AS A MATTER OF FACT, I HAVE SEVERAL BITS OF BUSINESS ON MY LISTS THAT COULD ALL BE DONE TONIGHT WITHOUT CHANGING THINGS TOO MUCH. A FEW HOURS WON'T MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE WHEN THE RESULTS ARE THE SAME.

I NEVER REALLY HAVE TIME TO LOOK AROUND THE PLACES I GO. THIS LOOKS LIKE A NICE PLACE TO RELAX. I'VE HEARD WINTHROP ALWAYS HAD THE BEST IN CIGARS AND LIQUOR... AND I MIGHT AS WELL SEE FOR MYSELF WHILE I'M WAITING FOR THINGS TO HAPPEN.


I HAD A RATHER GOOD IDEA OF WHAT WAS TAKING PLACE UPSTAIRS. ...

UNCLE IS PROBABLY DEAD THIS VERY MINUTE... AND THE MORGANSON MONEY IS MINE! IT'S ABOUT TIME! YOU ARE SO RIGHT, DEAR JUDY! I COULD NOT HAVE WAITED MUCH LONGER!

IF YOU HADN'T BEEN SO ANXIOUS TO BECOME A COUNTESS AND HAD BOTHERED TO INVESTIGATE, YOU'D HAVE DISCOVERED THAT THE ODNEELS ARE HEREDITARY VAMPIRES! FORTUNATELY FOR ME, YOU WERE NOT THAT BRIGHT!

NO! NO! THERE ARE NO SUCH THINGS! BUT — BUT YOU ARE! HELP! HELP!





I AM, INDEED! AND ALL THIS TIME I'VE HAD TO CONCEAL MY TRUE NATURE! I'VE HAD TO SNEAK OUT AT NIGHT... HIDE MY VICTIMS... UNTIL FREEDOM WOULD AGAIN BE MINE!

HEH HEH! THIS IS EVEN BETTER THAN I PLANNED! I HAD INTENDED TO TELL THEM THAT YOU WERE MURDERED BY A FIEND! BUT NOW THEY'LL SIMPLY THINK YOU SLIPPED, FELL DOWN THE STAIRS AND WERE KILLED!

THE FOOLS WILL FIGURE YOU CUT YOURSELF FALLING AND BLEED TO DEATH! HEH HEH! YOU WERE A DUTIFUL WIFE, MY DEAR. NOT ONLY HAVE YOU GIVEN ME A FORTUNE... BUT YOU'VE GIVEN ME YOUR LIFE'S BLOOD!

THEY WON'T KNOW I WAS ANYWHERE AROUND WHEN IT HAPPENED... AND WHEN THEY SEE ME AGAIN I'LL BE IN MY HUMAN FORM AND THEY'LL NEVER SUSPECT ME!

I KNEW I HEARD A SCREAM! IT-IT'S JUDY!

THEN... STRANGELY ENOUGH...

I-I FEEL SO FUNNY! WHERE AM I? WHAT HAPPENED? I MUST HAVE BEEN HAVING A DREADFUL NIGHTMARE!

WHAT INCREDIBLE THING IS THIS? SHE CAN'T BE ALIVE! NO HUMAN BEING CAN LIVE WITH EVERY DROP OF BLOOD DRAINED FROM THE BODY!

POOR CHILD! WATCHING HER UNCLE DIE MUST HAVE BEEN MORE THAN SHE COULD STAND! PERHAPS HER EYES WERE BLINDED WITH TEARS AND SHE DIDN'T SEE THE STAIRS!

DID I HEAR MY WIFE SCREAM? WHAT HAPPENED?





NOW I REMEMBER! I REMEMBER EVERYTHING! MY HUSBAND! DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY! HE'S HORRIBLE, UNNATURAL... A VAMPIRE! HE TRIED TO KILL ME FOR UNCLE'S FORTUNE!

MY DEAR CHILD! YOU MUST BE SUFFERING FROM SHOCK! AND YOU LOOK ALMOST AS THOUGH YOU WERE DEAD!



LOOK! IT'S TRUE...! THERE HE GOES!—

AMAZING! WE MUST FOLLOW HIM... KEEP HIM FROM GETTING AWAY WHILE SOMEONE CALLS THE POLICE!



FOOLS! YOU'LL NEVER CATCH ME!

I'LL PHONE THE POLICE. THEY WON'T BELIEVE ME, BUT THEY'VE GOT TO COME! THEN THEY'LL SEE FOR THEMSELVES!

MY HEART! ALL THIS TERRIBLE, SHOCKING EXCITEMENT! I THINK I'M HAVING AN ATTACK!



IN THE MEANTIME, I WAS REALLY ENJOYING THESE STOLEN MOMENTS OF RELAXATION.

TOO BAD I'VE SELDOM HAD A CHANCE TO READ. THIS BOOK IS INTERESTING! IT'S CALLED "LIFE AFTER DEATH". I SHALL ENJOY TALKING TO THE CHAP WHO WROTE IT.

WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU GOING HERE?



GOOD EVENING, COUNTESS. I HAD A LITTLE BUSINESS TO TRANSACT WITH YOUR UNCLE TONIGHT. I WAS WAITING FOR HIM.

I DON'T BELIEVE YOU! MY UNCLE IS BEYOND THE POINT OF TRANSACTING BUSINESS! BY NOW HE IS DEAD!

AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO ME TONIGHT I'M NOT AFRAID OF ANYTHING HUMAN...NOT EVEN YOU WHO DARES INVADe THIS HOUSE LIKE A CRIMINAL!

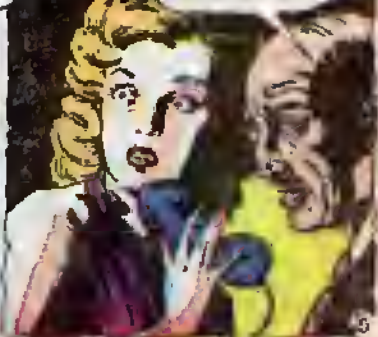
THE POLICE WILL DEAL WITH YOU! EVERYTHING HERE IS MINE...AND I WON'T LET ANYONE GET THE BEST OF ME!

WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND HERE?



POLICE! COME AT ONCE TO THE MORGANSON HOME! UNCLE WINTHROP! BUT—BUT I—I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!

I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WHEN I SAW HIM WALKING DOWN THE STAIRS! I—I DON'T KNOW HOW MY HEART SURVIVED IT!







HA HA! FOOLED YOU ALL, DIDN'T I? FOOLED MYSELF, TOO. THOUGHT SURE I HAD REACHED THE END. NOT A BAD FEELING... EXCEPT I COULD HEAR EVERYTHING AND KNEW HOW ANXIOUS YOU WERE TO GET RID OF ME!

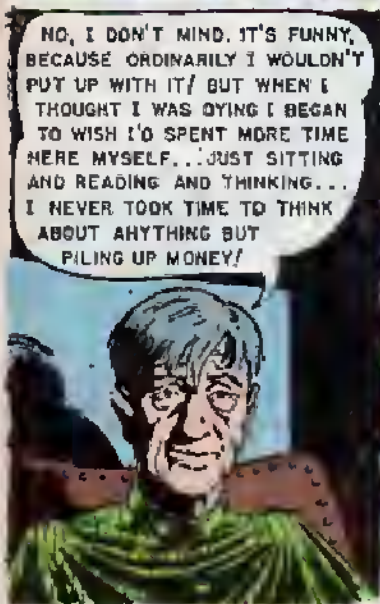


IN FACT MY DEAR HIECE... SO ANXIOUS THAT YOU AND YOUR COUNT DECIDED TO HURRY THINGS ALONG BY POISONING ME! I HEARD YOU TALKING! I WISHED I COULD HAVE A HALF HOUR LONGER ON EARTH JUST TO SEE PUNISHMENT METED OUT TO YOU BOTH. AND I GOT MY WISH!



AND WHO ARE YOU? I SEEM TO KNOW YOU... BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE BEEN HAVING A GOOD TIME HERE IN MY LIBRARY, READING MY BOOKS, DRINKING MY LIQUOR AND SMOKING MY CIGARS!

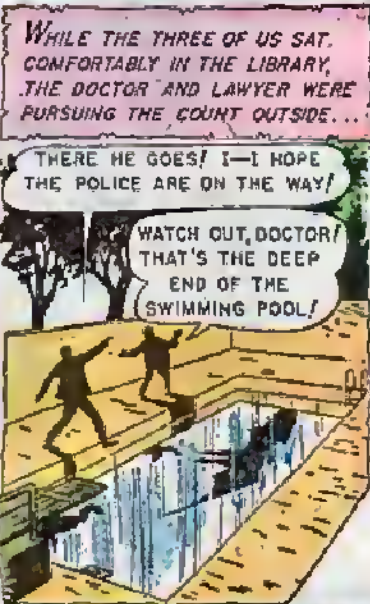
UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D MIND.



NO, I DON'T MIND. IT'S FUNNY, BECAUSE ORDINARILY I WOULDN'T PUT UP WITH IT! BUT WHEN I THOUGHT I WAS DYING I BEGAN TO WISH I'D SPENT MORE TIME HERE MYSELF... JUST SITTING AND READING AND THINKING... I NEVER TOOK TIME TO THINK ABOUT ANYTHING BUT PILING UP MONEY!



NO REASON WHY WE SHOULDN'T BOTH SIT FOR A FEW MINUTES, MR. MORGANSON. IN FACT, THAT'S WHY I WAITED, AND I'M SURE MR. MORGANSON WOULD BE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU JOIN US, SIMON.



WHILE THE THREE OF US SAT COMFORTABLY IN THE LIBRARY, THE DOCTOR AND LAWYER WERE PURSUING THE COUNT OUTSIDE...

THERE HE GOES! I—I HOPE THE POLICE ARE ON THE WAY!


WATCH OUT, DOCTOR! THAT'S THE DEEP END OF THE SWIMMING POOL!



I—I TOLD YOU TO WATCH! I CAN'T SWIM! THIS—THIS EXCITEMENT IS TERRIBLE FOR MY HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE!

HEH HEH! DID THOSE FOOLS THINK THE LAST OF THE FABULOUS VAMPIRES OF DONEEL COULD BE SNUFFED OUT THROUGH THEIR PUNY EFFORTS!





I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY SHE DID NOT DIE... BUT THIS TIME I'LL MAKE CERTAIN THAT SHE DOES!

AS THE COUNT SWOOPED DOWN, HE DIDN'T NOTICE A JAGGED TREE LIMB HIDDEN BY THE LEAVES...

AGGHHH! THE FATAL END FOR A VAMPIRE! A WOODEN STAKE THROUGH THE HEART!

THE TERRIBLE SCREAMS OF THE COUNT'S DYING AGONY MINGLED WITH JUDY'S HORRIFIED CRY AS HIS HURLING BODY STRUCK HER...

AT THAT MOMENT THE DOCTOR AND ALBERT APPEARED IN THE LIBRARY...

I WAS ON MY WAY BACK TO THE HOUSE TO TELL YOU DR. PAYNE HAD DROWNED WHEN SUDDENLY HE CAME RUNNING AFTER ME/I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT!

AS THE COUNT MADE HIS SPECTACULAR ESCAPE, HIS WIFE WAS ALSO ATTEMPTING TO FLEE THE RESULT OF HER GREEO...

SNAP

AGGHHH!

OH! MY BLOOD PRESSURE! I-I COULDN'T GO THROUGH ANOTHER NIGHT LIKE THIS!

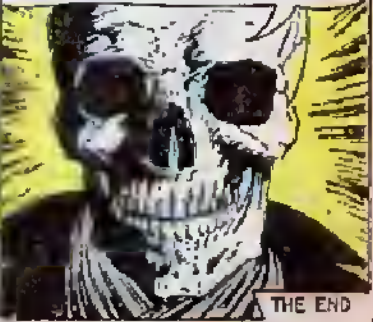
YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO, MY FRIEND. SIT DOWN AND ENJOY A LAST DRINK WITH ME...BECAUSE I SHALL HAVE TO GO BACK TO MY JOB BEFORE THE POLICE GET HERE.

WHEN THE POLICE ARRIVED, I WAS GONE... I COULDN'T BLAME THEM FOR BEING PUZZLED. FOR THEY FOUND THAT OLD MORGANSON HAD GASED HIS LAST IN A LIBRARY CHAIR INSTEAD OF IN HIS BED... AND THE DOCTOR TOO, DEAD IN THE LIBRARY, LOOKING AS THO HE'D BEEN DROWNED. BUT THE POLICE DIDN'T KNOW THAT EVERYTHING HAD WORKED OUT ACCORDING TO MY SCHEDULE. THE DOCTOR WAS TO HAVE DROWNED ANYWAY WHILE ON A FISHING TRIP... BUT FELL INTO A SWIMMING POOL INSTEAD. JUDY WAS FATED TO DIE AT HER HUSBAND'S HANDS-- AND THAT HAPPENED! AND THE COUNT'S CURSED LINE WAS DESTINED TO LAST BUT FOUR HUNDRED YEARS... AND THAT WAS UP ON MIDNIGHT, FRIDAY THE 13TH.

SIMON'S HEART AND ALBERT'S BLOOD PRESSURE TOOK THEM OFF A LITTLE PREMATURELY PERHAPS.. THEY GOT ON MY LIST WHEN THEY DECIDED TO WORK OVERTIME FOR A SLICE OF THE MORGANSON FORTUNE MAYBE THINGS WERE A LITTLE PUSHED. BUT IT WILL SAVE ME TIME LATER... A REALLY RELAXING EVENING! EVEN THOUGH I ENJOYED A LITTLE HOLIDAY, EVERYTHING TOOK CARE OF ITSELF!



I OUGHT TO BE DEAD! I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M NOT!



THE END